

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES AND
CHILD/FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS
25 INDUSTRIAL PARK ROAD
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT 06457-1543

TO: National School Lunch Sponsors

FROM: Maureen B. Staggenborg, Director - Child Nutrition Programs

DATE: December 5, 2005

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum # 05-06

SUBJECT: Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Recent federal legislation authorized funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a program that offers free fruits and vegetables to students during the school day. Public Law 109-97 provides \$6,000,000 to be distributed among six states: **Connecticut**, Utah, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Texas, and Idaho. Within each state, 25 schools would participate. The purpose of the program is to increase fruit (both fresh and dried) and fresh vegetable consumption in elementary and secondary schools. The level of funds provided to any one school depends on the demographics of schools that are selected to participate in the program. This program has been operated in other parts of the country over the last two years. An evaluation and description of the program can be found on line at <http://www.fns.USDA.gov/cnd/Research/FV030063.pdf>

Enclosed with this memorandum is a School Selection Application. Interested school districts should complete and return this form no later than **January 6, 2006** to: Teri Dandeneau, Connecticut State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

Use of Funds

Funds are to be used primarily to purchase fresh and dried fruits and fresh vegetables to be made available at no charge to students. A small percentage of funds may be used for operating and administrative costs incurred for costs such as value added purchases, preparation and distribution of fruits and vegetables. In the proposal narrative on the School Profile sheet, please indicate what types of costs, not dollar amounts, besides food purchases you might incur. The project should be structured so that maximum benefits go to children.

Expectations of Participating Schools

Selected schools must make free fresh and dried fruit and fresh vegetables available to students at times other than at meal service periods. Participating schools will be asked to provide information about participation, purchases, costs, a la carte and vending machine sales to the State agency through the school food authority. This type of information is probably readily available already. USDA will also need one brief report prepared in conjunction with any partners the school may enlist. The reports will be submitted through the State agency. Selected

sites may be asked to provide additional information to an outside evaluator in the form of a brief survey, conference call and/or a focus group with student participants and implementers. The Child Nutrition Program Agreement will be amended to include this program if any of your schools are selected to participate. Also, an orientation session is planned for January 30, 2005 and representatives from each selected school will be expected to attend this meeting.

Selection Criteria

Schools will be selected by the State agency, based on guidance in this memorandum and the attached oversight and information by USDA. Public Law 108-265 established the following criteria for schools to participate in this program:

- To the maximum extent practicable, the majority of schools selected are those in which 50% or more of students are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- Priority is given to schools that submit a plan for implementation of the program that includes a partnership with one or more entities that provide non-federal resources (including entities representing the fruit and vegetable industry) for the acquisition, handling, promotion, or distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables; or other support that contributes to the purposes of the program, such as nutrition education.
- Additionally, schools that are applying must provide a certification of support signed by the school food manager, the school principal and the district superintendent or equivalent positions for private schools or residential child care institutions.
- For additional criteria, please refer to the attached Selection Criteria and Questions and Answers.

How To Apply

Included with this letter is the School Selection Application to be completed for each school that wishes to be considered for participation. The application is designed to capture essential information that is readily available and may be completed by a school or by the School Food Authority on behalf of their schools. You may also download a copy of the application by going to the following website: <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/nutrition/schoolnutrIndex.htm>.

The information about this program an application packet has also been sent to the Superintendents of all public school districts. The State Department of Education encourages your participation in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program as another way to help your students develop lifelong healthful eating habits. If you have any questions, please contact either Teri Dandeneau at 860-807-2079 (teri.dandeneau@po.state.ct.us) or Maureen Staggenborg at 860-807-2070 (Maureen.staggenborg@po.state.ct.us).

MBS:mbs

Enclosures